

Dear Mr. Gautreau:

Thank you for your presentation during the public meeting of the Mississippi River Commission held in Morgan City, Louisiana, on August 23, 2001.

In your oral comments accompanying your formal statement submitted for the record, you mentioned a study of Bayou Manchac in the vicinity of the Alligator Bayou Watershed. Negotiations are underway with the Pontchartrain Levee District and the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development to initiate a flood control and ecosystem restoration feasibility study of Bayou Manchac, Bayou Fountain, and Ward Creek. The study is expected to be initiated in Fiscal Year 2002.

Our responses to your recommendations for improvements in the Pontchartrain Levee District are given below in the order outlined in your statement submitted for the record at the meeting.

Recommendations for Improvements in the Pontchartrain Levee District

As you noted in your statement, the completion of the Carville-Marchand levee enlargement in March 2001 brought the Mississippi River levees within the Pontchartrain Levee District up to or above the designated grade.

Lack of funding continues to delay closing the slope pavement gaps at the Ben Hurr area of East Baton Rouge Parish, Baton Rouge-Burnside Reach, and the Burnside-St. Charles/Jefferson Parish Line Reach. The Corps will schedule this work as soon as funding permits.

The New Orleans District will work with the levee district to replace the sand/clay gravel in the levee crown with crushed limestone. The stone would be purchased by the Corps and spread by the Pontchartrain Levee District. The work will be scheduled as funding and priorities permit.

Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity, Hurricane Protection, St. Charles Parish

The New Orleans District is continuing efforts to expedite the construction of the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity project in St. Charles Parish. Although the Corps has not received the appropriation for Fiscal Year 2002, we anticipate the need to secure additional project funds to maintain the construction schedule. If this turns out to be the case, we believe that additional funds can be transferred into the project during Fiscal Year 2002. The District is proceeding as rapidly as possible with the design and construction of this project.

The contract for the Bayou Trepangier Drainage Structure was completed in December 2000. Construction of the Cross Bayou Drainage Structure began this year, and we hope to complete work by 2002. Reach 1B, First Lift Levee was completed in January 2001. The St. Rose Drainage Structure is scheduled for award in January 2002. Work on the remaining drainage structures, which are located in Reach 1B, must wait for at least 2 years after completion of that contract to allow for consolidation of the underlying soils. Completion of those structures is scheduled for 2004. This will provide a closed system of protection for the east bank of St. Charles Parish.

West Shore, Lake Pontchartrain, Hurricane Protection

The West Shore-Lake Pontchartrain feasibility study was initiated on April 1, 1998. The Corps completed the evaluation of alternative alignments and presented the results to the

Pontchartrain Levee District and St. John the Baptist Parish in January 2001. St. John the Baptist Parish does not support the proposed plan and has requested the evaluation of an alternative alignment. Designs and cost estimates are being prepared for the plan proposed by St. John the Baptist Parish so that a comparison of the two plans can be made. Fiscal Year 2002 funds will be used to identify the tentatively selected plan, prepare the draft feasibility report, and hold a review conference with higher Corps authority. A draft feasibility report is scheduled for completion in April 2002.

Thank you again for your presentation. The Commission appreciates receiving your comments and looks forward to hearing from you at our future public meetings.

Sincerely,

Edwin J. Arnold, Jr.
Brigadier General, U. S. Army
President Designee, Mississippi
River Commission